Using Portfolios in the Foreign Language Classroom: The Rationale and Implementation

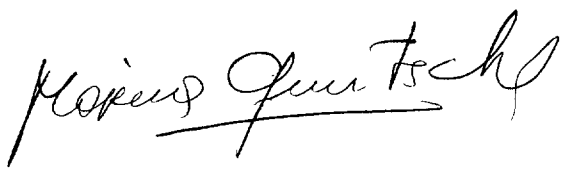
An Honors Thesis

by

Jody B. Talkington

Thesis Advisor

Dr. Marina Guntsche



Ball State University

Muncie, Indiana

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Abstract

The rationale for using portfolios in foreign language instruction in the high school and college classrooms as well as guide to implementing portfolios in a foreign language classroom are combined to aid teachers in assessing acquisition of the language by his or her students. Part One will discuss the pedagogical framework, or rationale, for using portfolios in a foreign language classroom. This framework is made up of three parts. The first part involves establishing key elements necessary for active learning to take place. Active learning involves students reflecting on ideas and creating their own, as opposed to passive learning in which the students only take in ideas from the teacher. The second part describes how these elements are involved in foreign language acquisition. The third part demonstrates the effectiveness of student portfolios as an assessment tool that more accurately measures the achievement of active learning in the classroom. Part Two is a suggested guide for foreign language educators on how to implement portfolios in the classroom.

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Part One

Introduction

While reflecting on high school foreign language classes, many former students have commented, "I studied a foreign language in high school. Even though I got good grades, I can't remember anything now." To address this problem it becomes important to consider various approaches to teaching foreign languages at the high school and college levels. In certain traditionally used teaching methods, such as grammar charts that are isolated from the context of the language, students may have temporarily memorized many facts concerning foreign language grammar and vocabulary without internalizing it. Fortunately, within the last two decades (The College Board, 1996), a wave of educational reform has emerged in the United States and other parts of the world (Robinson, 1981). Teaching methods have changed from mere knowledge based approaches, in which students memorize information provided to them by the teacher, to contemporary performance-based approaches, in which primary emphasis is placed on a student's ability to apply skills and knowledge to every day life. Due to all the changes occurring in the types of methods that are used, there is a need for new assessment to match the new methods.

Recent criticism (Herman, Aschbacher &Winter, 1992) reveals their limitations. Traditional assessment has emphasized the measurement of a given body of defined and discrete knowledge as determined by a student's performance on an objective tests. This type of assessment does not take into consideration the learning process. It confines the education of an individual to a specific point in time. On the other hand, alternative approaches toward assessment, such as the portfolio, require students to apply what they know within meaningful contexts (Barton & Collins, 1997). There are many types of authentic assessment but none that I can see are as comprehensive as the student portfolio. Student portfolios are a collection of student work and student reflections on their work chosen to represent the students learning over a period of time. Portfolios call for more student involvement in planning assessment,

interpreting the results of the assessment, and determining self-assessment, and therefore provide the necessary opportunity for change in foreign language education.

Key Elements Involved in Active Learning

To properly investigate the use of portfolios in foreign language assessment for individual students, it becomes vital for good educators to define active learning. To determine a working definition of active learning, it is important to take into account the philosophies of two education thinkers, American John Dewey (1859-1952) and Brazilian Paulo Freire (1921-1997). In both the educational philosophies of Dewey and Freire there is found an exhortation for the engagement of the students' minds in the classroom in accordance to the experiences from their own lives. This type of engagement is active learning.

Educator and philosopher John Dewey's pedagogical legacy cannot be overlooked as the milestone for reform in educational philosophies. Mark Smith, author for *The Encyclopedia of Informal Education*, says about Dewey that he has made "arguably the most significant contribution to the development of educational thinking in the twentieth century (1997)." Dewey proposed new objectives and practices for education that questioned traditional methods. His objectives have developed into several of the basic criteria by which active learning is recognized. In essence, active learning is no longer accepted upon the sole basis of a student's ability to memorize and reproduce information, but rather active learning is considered to be happening as students display interaction and participation in reflective and critical thought with educators. *The Encyclopedia for Informal Education* continues,

> John Dewey's significance for informal educators lies in a number of areas. First, his belief that education must engage with and enlarge experience has continued to be a significant strand in informal education practice. Second, and linked to this, Dewey's exploration of thinking and reflection - and the associated role of educators - has continued to be an inspiration. Third, his concern with interaction and environments for learning provide a continuing framework for practice. Last, his passion for democracy,

> for educating so that all may share in a common life, provides a strong rationale for practice in the associations settings in which informal educators work. (Smith, 1997).

Dewey's philosophy of education also defines active learning in that he maintains that it is necessary that reflective thinking occur in education. He claims that reflective thinking is a path to freedom.

> Genuine freedom, in short, is intellectual; it rests in the trained power of thought, in the ability to "turn things over," to look at matters deliberately, to judge whether the amount and kind of evidence requisite for decision is a hand, and if not, to tell where and how to seek such evidence. If a man's actions are not guided by thoughtful conclusions, then they are guided by inconsiderate impulse, unbalanced appetite, caprice, or the circumstances of the moment. To cultivate unhindered, unreflective external activity is to foster enslavement, for it leaves the person at the mercy of appetite, sense, and circumstance. (Dewey, 1933. p.90)

Several educators have expanded and developed teaching pedagogies that have had their roots within Dewey's framework of education. One such educator was Paulo Freire. Freire has been acknowledged as one of the most influential educational thinkers in the twentieth century (Smith, 1997). Like Dewey, Freire shares a concern for experience, reflective practices, and engagement in the educational process. However, Freire takes Dewey's concept of education as a practice of freedom one step further in developing reflective thinking as an objective of active learning and suggests that liberation, or freedom, is the ultimate pursuit of all education. Smith writes,

> The Brazilian educationalist, Paulo Freire, has left a significant mark on thinking about progressive practice. His *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is currently one of the most quoted educational texts (especially in Latin America, Africa and Asia). Freire was able to draw upon, and weave together, a number of strands of thinking about educational practice and liberation (1997).

Freire defines active learning, or true education, as the practice of freedom. Freire writes, "Authentic liberation- the process of humanization- is not another deposit to be made in men.

Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it (Freire, 1970. p.60)." Freire contrasts "liberating education" with an unsatisfactory type of education he terms the "banking concept of education." Within the framework of this teaching structure, educators operate as people making informational deposits into their students. The students in turn receive the deposit and function as the bank account for this information. As learners, students are then responsible for memorizing and recalling the information that has been deposited by the educator. Although the banking method of education is traditionally quite common, its consequences are problematic. Perhaps the greatest disadvantage to this method is its narrow compartmentalization. The more completely students accept the banking method's passive, non-reflective role, the more they will adapt to the fragmented reality presented to them by the educator. Freedom in education is a mandatory practice because it means that the students begin to have a voice in the educational process. When they have a voice, they are in dialogue with the teacher and each other and they are actively learning. Freire writes,

> Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with student-teachers. The teacher is no longer the-one-who-teaches, but the one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow (1970, p. 60).

In accordance with Freire and Dewey, and for the purposes of this thesis, true education will consequently be defined as the practice of freedom. Students do not learn by passively accepting information deposited into them by educators, nor when impulse or circumstance guides students' actions, but only when students are engaged in reflective thinking. Reflective thought is the powerful vehicle, which transports students from disengaged "banking" to real learning. Since reflective thought is such a prime agent in the active learning process, it consequently becomes important to determine an acceptable definition of reflective thought. For the remainder of this thesis, Dewey's assertion about reflective thinking, that "active, persistent,

and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends constitutes reflective thought (1933. p.9)" will be used.

There are three essential advantages of facilitating reflective thought in the real learning process. According to Dewey: 1. It makes action with a conscious aim possible. One no longer has to be a slave to his or her behavior by actively making a choice to act otherwise. 2. It enables a person to prepare and invent. Unnecessary problems can be avoided with preparation. Inventions can allow for transformation and reformation. 3. It enriches things with meaning. Reflective thinking enhances the connections being made in the mind producing a more thorough meaning for life's events. Dewey writes, "The great reward of exercising the power of thinking is that there are no limits to the possibility of carrying over into the objects and events of life, meanings originally acquired by thoughtful examination, and hence no limit to the continued growth of meaning in human life (1933. p.21)."

Training of reflective thinking must occur to prevent two problems; under developed thinking skills as well as incorrect thinking skills. Comparing these two problems, Dewey considers incorrect thinking a greater concern because its results are dangerous. He says, "Thinking may develop in positively wrong ways and lead to false and harmful beliefs. The need of systematic training would be less than it is if the only danger to be feared were lack of any development; the evil of the wrong kind of development is even greater (1933. p.22)." Training reflective thinking involves teaching methods that develop curiosity, suggestion, and exploration in order to increase the desire of inquiry into the unknown. As students refine and polish reflective thinking skills, their ability to construct more accurate conclusions based upon the facts that they observe increases.

Taking into account the ideas of Dewey and Freire about reflective thinking and freedom, I have concluded that active learning is the non passive learning that occurs when the student's voice, which forms from careful and intentional thinking, is acknowledge and encouraged by the teacher. The key elements to creating active learning in the classroom are:

Student Responsibility. Students are actively involved in the entire learning process, from planning to evaluation. *Reflective thinking.* Students are consciously thinking about what they are being taught in order to form their own ideas as opposed to trying to understand the correct or conventional understanding of the teacher. *Authenticity.* Empty methodologies as assessment practices are replaced with methods that promote seeing the big picture, as opposed to a fragmented reality.

Key Elements of Active Learning Incorporated in the Foreign Language Classroom

Incorporating the key elements of learning in the foreign language classroom involves answering the question: What is the purpose of teaching foreign language? Research Associate of bilingual and cross-cultural education, Gail Robinson, outlines in her book, *Issues in Second Language and Cross-Cultural Education: The Forest Through the Trees* (1981), the results of several 1975 studies that examine the opinions of Australian students, parents, teachers, and language departments regarding the purpose of foreign language study. Despite diverse opinions, she found that overall the students, parents, teachers and language departments answered surprisingly similarly. They answered that the purpose of studying a foreign language was to learn about another culture.

> When pressed to justify the inclusion of foreign language study as distinct from other areas of study, they usually justify it in terms of sociocultural benefits, e.g., foreign language study will give one the key into another culture, will lead to an awareness, understanding, and sensitivity toward other people and their way of life, or will lessen insularity (p.24).

Learning a foreign language is intricately united with gaining insight into another culture. The words of a language are symbols for objects and ideas in that culture. The word given to a particular object or idea reveals the thoughts and identity of the person or culture that uses that particular word. The creators of the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning also define the purpose for studying foreign language in sociocultural terms, as indicated in the beginning part of their philosophy of learning: "Communication is at the heart of human experience. The United States must educate students who are linguistically equipped to

communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad (The College Board, 1996)."

If the purpose of studying a foreign language is to communicate with people from another culture in order to gain a better understanding of that person and that culture, the next question that must be answered is: How does it translate into the curricula? The reality has been that the sociocultural goal is rarely reflected in curriculum practices. Several factors contribute to this dilemma. For example: teachers who do not understand the culture of their students or the culture of the people who speak the foreign language, the assumption that cultural understanding and positive attitudes toward another culture happen naturally in foreign language study, and an overemphasis on how language skills are acquired rather than on why they are acquired.

A remedy to this problem involves incorporating the key elements of learning discussed earlier. The first element, student responsibility, is applied when the teacher not only understands the culture of the people who speak the foreign language, but also understands the culture of the students he or she is teaching. The teacher focuses on what the child already knows about the foreign language and the people who speak it, and then considers what materials and instructional strategies are necessary. The students are then responsible for the instructional objectives that the teacher creates. The second element, reflective thinking, relates to the first but is different in that it pertains not to the teacher understanding the students but the student understanding him or herself. The student will not understand a person from another culture without first reflectively thinking about his own experiences and preconceived ideas about other cultures and how it differs from his or her own culture. The third element, authenticity, involves teaching methods with activities that allow the students to experience the foreign language in real life situations rather than teaching isolated grammar rules of the language, such as role playing and spontaneous dialogue.

Student Portfolios as an Assessment Tool for Active Learning

If the goal of studying a foreign language is that students "really learn" the foreign language in order to communicate with people from another culture, it is important to assess

whether or not this learning is actually taking place. Assessment is an evaluation of the students' demonstration of whether or not they have learned the language in a meaningful way, and an evaluation of the teacher's ability to allow for real learning. ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) and other foreign language associations have attempted to aid in the assessment of foreign language teaching and learning by creating the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning. The foreign language standards are not intended to be a curriculum guide nor do they describe specific course content and sequence of study. They exist to define what the students should know and be able to do if true learning of a foreign language occurs. There are 11 standards divided in five content areas. The following is a list of the standards:

COMMUNICATION
1.1 Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.
1.2 Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.
1.3 Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on variety of topics.
CULTURES
2.1 Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the perspectives and practices of the culture studied.
2.2 Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.
CONNECTIONS
3.1 Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.
3.2 Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures.
COMPARISONS
4.1 Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studies and their own.
4.2 Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.
COMMUNITIES
5.1 Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.
5.2 Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment.
(The College Board, 1996. p.4-5).

Establishing these standards in the classroom requires assessment strategies that will enable teachers to teach and test effectively. In recent years, foreign language educators began to adopt alternative assessment practices that reflect the reforms that have been made in the classroom instruction (The College Board, 1996). These assessment strategies are performance-based, otherwise known as authentic assessment. Many foreign language teachers have relied on assessments such as written tests given at the end of each chapter that contain only objective fill-in-the-blank type questions. This type of assessment falls short in the following ways: it

measures the student's ability at only one specific point in time, it doesn't capture the range of the student's ability, it does not include the teacher's knowledge of the student as a learner, and it doesn't give responsibility to the student (Barnhardt, Kevorkian & Delett, 1998). Authentic assessment fills in where traditional assessment lacks. It measures student's ability over time, it captures many facets of the student's ability, it allows for expression of the teacher's knowledge of the student as a learner, and it encourages the student to learn how to take responsibility. Authentic assessment focuses the attention of the teacher and the student on the big picture rather than on discrete details. The College Board (1996) describes authentic assessment as assessment that incorporates production tasks, allows for multiple strategies an solutions, and that has relevance to the lives of the students outside of the classroom. Four university professors; Beverly Shaklee, Nancy Barbour, Richard Ambrose and Susan Hansford, wrote a book entitled, Designing and Using Portfolios (1997) which describes the difference between traditional assessment and authentic assessment in the following way:

> A teacher might be able to note that a child scored 70 percent in mathematics, but unless that teacher has the time to take a closer look, he or she would not necessarily be able to determine where the child needs help, what concepts need to be mastered, and what instructional strategies should be used to enhance development...Authentic assessment augments the quantitative tradition by adding a qualitative component to the assessment process...it contributes subjective, personal, and professional elements to the objective measures (p.7-8).

Student portfolios serve as effective authentic assessment tools because they are comprehensive in what they measure as opposed to being quantitative and selective. Portfolios assess the student's progress and range of ability over a period of time. "Portfolios are well-designed collections of significant samples of students' work over time, accompanied by clear criteria for evaluation and students' reflections on their own progress (The College Board, 1996. p.37)." The criteria and student reflections contained in the portfolio are constantly being evaluated by the teacher and other peers. Although teachers have different ideas about the content and organization, there are characteristics that are common to all portfolios. Educators James Barton and Angelo Collins list seven general portfolio characteristics in their book, *Portfolio Assessment: A Handbook for Educators* (1997). 1. The portfolio is multi-sourced; there

is a variety of evidence for student competency. 2. It is authentic because the instruction and evidence are linked. 3. It is dynamic because it captures the growth and change of students over time. 4. It assures that the purpose of instruction is explicit. 5. It integrates life experiences into the classroom. 6. It allows for student ownership. 7. It has a multi-purposed nature; it is an assessment of both the student and teacher.

Each of the seven characteristics contribute in making portfolios a tool for assessing active learning in the foreign language classroom because they provide a structure for students to demonstrate the key elements of education that have previously been established. Student responsibility is a key part of student portfolios. The teacher allows the student to have a voice in his or her own learning because the student must choose samples of their work; also known as artifacts, that they feel best demonstrates their understanding. Reflective thinking occurs in several venues. Students write reflections for each artifact stating what the sample is and what they have learned. They are also asked to discuss their progress with other peers and in one-on-one conferences with the teacher. Authenticity is demonstrated in the variety of student samples that the portfolio contains. The student's learning is assessed as a process over a period of time rather than limiting what the student has learned to one specific point in time.

After defining what student portfolios are, it is important to ask the question: Why use student portfolios as opposed to other authentic assessments, such as modified oral interviews, monologues, role playing, and integrated assessments? James Barton and Angelo Collins offer in their book, *Portfolio Assessment: A handbook for Educators* (1997), five advantages of adopting portfolios over other methods of assessment: 1. Ongoing opportunities for students and teachers to communicate about the learning that takes place in the classroom. 2. Student work is viewed in context. 3. Ownership of learning is shifted onto the students, which can lead to a strong sense of personal accomplishment. 4. A supportive environment is created that allows students to freely communicate their ideas. 5. Teachers are encouraged to constantly consider what they really want students to accomplish.

One advantage of portfolio assessment is that it does not require one specific teaching method or content area, but can be adapted in a variety of ways that match the styles of individual teachers and students.

Conclusion

After laying out the pedagogical framework of student portfolios, it can be concluded that the goal of portfolios is to assess the key elements involved in active learning. The key elements: student responsibility, reflective thinking and authenticity, are elements that can and must be incorporated into specific content areas. In foreign language, student responsibility takes shape when the teacher includes the students' prior knowledge of the foreign language in learning activities. The students help to set the criteria for their language acquisition. The students have a voice in their own education. Reflective thinking occurs in the foreign language classroom when the students are trained to exam their own culture in ways that will allow them to better understand and communicate with people from other cultures. They must also reflect on what they are learning about another culture and how that affects them. Authenticity is incorporated when the language is introduced in real life situations rather than a list of grammatical rules. Student portfolios are tools for assessing the key elements of active learning because their structure allows: 1. Students take responsibility by choosing work that demonstrates their own growth; 2. Students reflect on what they have learned from each work sample; and 3. he students' learning is documented over a period of time, which demonstrates overall growth.

Too often foreign language is taught in isolation from the lives of the learner and from the culture in which it is used. Isolated language instruction results in minimal acquisition of the language and almost no understanding of the culture where the language is communicated. Changing the philosophy of instruction from traditional methods and forms of assessment, which lean toward teaching isolated facts, to authentic methods and assessment has led the study of a foreign language in a new direction. Student Portfolios used in the foreign language classroom ensure that students are in the process of actively learning.

Part Two

In order for portfolio assessment to be valid and authentic in each learning environment it needs to be adapted to individual instructional practices and curricula. Part Two of this thesis is a guide for foreign language teachers on how to implement portfolios in foreign language classrooms. The guide is not a step by step set of rules that must occur in order to use portfolios in the classroom, but rather a compilation of questions and suggestions that will aid the teacher in creating a portfolio that will work for his or her specific classroom. The guide consists of six questions the teacher must answer for effectively implement portfolios in the foreign language classroom:

1. What is the purpose?
2. Who is the audience?
3. What are the student objectives that match the purpose of the portfolio?
4. What types of evidence are available that demonstrate achievement of student objectives?
5. How will the portfolio be organized?
6. How will the portfolio and individual artifacts be assessed?

* Part Two includes an appendix that contains sample worksheets taken from the National Capital Resource's manual on how to use portfolios in the foreign language classroom (1998).

Question #1: What is the Purpose?

The first and most important step in implementing portfolios is setting the assessment purpose. The purpose states what you want to measure and why you want to make that measurement. Determining the purpose provides focus and direction. It should be specific but not too narrow that it limits the range of student ability that can be assessed. Some examples of purposes for portfolios in the foreign language classroom are (Padilla, Aninao, &Sung, 1996):

- To assess students' growth in proficiency of the National Standards for Foreign Language for level one high school Spanish.
- To assess certain language abilities, which standardized tests fail to measure, such as oral proficiency interviews.
- To assess work that students believe shows unusual learning and/or ability in order to increase student responsibility.

The purpose should be explicitly stated and shared with the students when the portfolios are first introduced. As the school year continues the teacher and the students can continue to refer back to the purpose on order to stay on track.

Question #2: Who is the Audience?

The audience for a portfolio is the person or people who will assess it. The purpose of the portfolio will dictate who the audience will be. For example, if the purpose were to assess progress toward the national standards, the audience would be the person who evaluates that progress. That person may be the student, teacher, department chair, or administrator. The purpose and audience will influence the student objectives and the portfolios' contents, which will be discussed in the following questions.

Question #3: What are the Student Objectives that match the Purpose of the Portfolio?

Student objectives describe in detail the tasks the student should be able to perform and the knowledge or skills the student should be able to demonstrate. For example, "Student is able to orally describe different types of food," or " Student is able to write his or her likes and dislikes pertaining to food." The student objectives established for the portfolio will be the most important guide to planning portfolio contents. There will be many student objectives assessed in the portfolio. All objectives will support the purpose of the portfolio.

The National Standards for Foreign Language Learning provide excellent guidelines for creating student objectives. See the appendix for an abbreviated version of the standards.

Question #4: What Types of Evidence are Available that Demonstrate Achievement of Student Objectives?

The evidence that demonstrates student achievement of objectives comes primarily from the student's work and the student's reflections on their work and what they have learned. Student works included in portfolios are often called artifacts. Examples of artifacts are: compositions and drafts, journal entries, reading responses, letters to penpals, standardized tests and quizzes, skits and plays on video cassette, songs on audio cassette, speeches and presentations on audio/video cassette, pictures and drawings, souvenirs of class trips, photographs of large works, etc.

Each artifact that is included in the portfolio is accompanied by a reflection written in either Spanish or English from the student. The reflection should describe what the artifact is and what the student learned from it. It is important that the teacher teaches the students how to

write reflections because the students may not know how. Modeling and writing a reflection as a class will familiarize the students with writing reflections.

The reliability of the portfolio as an assessment tool increases if the evidence is drawn from various sources beyond the student's work, such as documents from the teacher, parents and other students. Many educators often call such documents attestations. Some examples of attestations are: parent letters, teacher's classroom observations, peer-assessment forms, notes from parent-teacher conferences, etc.

The student will collect every artifact and attestation that is done during a designated assessment period, and then he or she will choose specific artifacts and attestations that best demonstrate the progress made toward the portfolio objectives. Barton and Collins (1997) offer questions to ask as guidelines for deciding which artifacts and attestations to choose for the final portfolio. The following are three of the questions:

1. Does the portfolio show the student's growth over time?
2. Is the evidence varied?
3. Does the portfolio give you a sense of the student's interests inside and beyond the classroom?

Question #5: How will the Portfolio be Organized?

There are several details to consider when organizing student portfolios. The first consideration is what type of portfolio containers will be used. The students will need one to hold possible works to be included in the portfolio and another for the actual portfolio. The type of container will depend on the resources available to the teacher. If the school is not able to provide resources the type of containers will depend on the socioeconomic status of the students; what can they afford to buy?

A second consideration is where the portfolios will be stored. There needs to be available space to keep the portfolios in the classroom. Identifying existing available spaces such as a spare closet, shelf, or filing cabinet is a good start.

A third consideration deals with portfolio management questions such as: How often will the students add artifacts and attestations to their portfolios? And how often will the contents of the portfolio be reviewed and evaluated? The answers to these questions will look different in every classroom. There are no set rules. Although there are no mandated answers, there must be answers for each individual classroom. Whatever decisions are made about the management of the portfolio must be communicated to the students from the very beginning.

Question #6: How will the Portfolio and Individual Artifacts be Assessed?

The first step in assessing the portfolio is setting the criteria. Criteria describe what the learner should be able to do. Thus, criteria are the same as the student objectives; the difference is the time in which they are used. The former is used in assessment and the latter in used in designing instruction. Once the criteria is established there needs to be a rating scale to measure the extent to which the students have achieved the objectives in terms of quality and/or quantity. This is possible via instruments called rubrics. Rubrics combine criteria with rating scales to assess individual artifacts in the portfolio and the portfolio as a whole. The following statements are examples of statements that might be found on a rubric:

The student can orally describe the seasons of the year. 1 2 3 4

The student can effectively communicate his or her likes and dislikes in written form.
Poor Fair Good Excellent

The rubric may be as simple as stating the objective and marking yes or no indicating whether or not the objective was met.

A rubric for evaluating the portfolio as a whole must also be developed. The rubric should be developed and communicated to the students before the portfolio begins, allowing for adaptations when necessary. In order to promote student responsibility, it is important that both the students and teacher are assessing the student portfolio as a whole and as individual artifacts.

Sharing Your Portfolio Experience

Using student portfolios in the foreign language classroom becomes truly useful when the foreign language teachers reflect on their experiences deciding what worked and what needs to be changed for the next time. After honestly evaluating what they have learned, their experiences become valuable resources to share with other teachers via informal discussions, workshops, articles or Internet sites.

Conclusion

Successful portfolios may look different in every classroom. The contents and physical appearance of the portfolio depend on the individual teachers and their students. However, the six questions mention in part two of this thesis: 1. What is the purpose? 2. Who is the audience? 3. What are the student objectives that match the purpose of the portfolio? 4. What types of evidence are available that demonstrate achievement of student objectives? 5. How will the portfolio be organized? 6. How will the portfolio and individual artifacts be assessed? , are necessary to be answered by every teacher attempting to use portfolios in the classroom because the answer to these questions will ensure that the portfolio is organized, valid and reliable as an assessment tool.

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Appendix

1. Establishing the Purpose and Audience for Your Portfolio
2. Planning Worksheet for Specifying Portfolio Contents
3. Student's Annotation for Artifacts
4. Student's Final Portfolio Self-Assessment Checklist
5. Teacher's Assessment of Student Portfolio
6. Teacher's Portfolio Record
7. The National Standards for Foreign Language Learning
8. Teacher's Foreign Language Standards Checklist
9. Student's Foreign Language Standards Checklist
10. Teacher's Assessment Check: Responsiveness to Standards

Establishing the Purpose and Audience for Your Portfolio

PURPOSE

What do you want to measure? Why do you want to make that measurement?

The purpose for my portfolio is:

AUDIENCE

Who will evaluate the portfolio? Who will need to understand the portfolio's purpose, objectives, rubrics, organization, and contents?

The audience for my portfolio is:

Planning Worksheet for Specifying Portfolio Contents

Step 1: **Identify the goals of your portfolio and brainstorm possible corresponding tasks in your curriculum.**

Portfolio Purpose: _____

Portfolio Audience: _____

Goal*	**Goal 1:**	**Goal 2:**
Tasks: List tasks in your curriculum that could reflect outcomes for each goal.		

**Use another sheet of paper for additional goals.*

Step 2: **Take an inventory of available material resources. Think about who will supply these resources**

A. Materials available for portfolio contents:

____ paper	____ poster board	____ construction paper
____ photographs	____ VCR/video tapes	____ audio cassettes
____ E-mail access	____ computer diskettes	____ Internet access
____ scanner	____ camera	____ copier machine

Other ideas:

B. Materials available for containers:

____ Pocket folder	____ Manila Envelopes	____ Binders
____ Boxes	____ Crates	____ Diskettes
____ Video tape	____ Audio cassettes	____ Poster board

Other ideas:

C. Possible storage spaces for portfolios:

____ In the classroom (Is privacy an issue?)

____ Shelf	____ Desk	____ Drawer	____ Floor
____ Closet	____ Office	____ Window sill	

Other ideas (in your car, home, etc.):

D. If you decide to work with technology, what technical support do you have?

Reminder: ***Do you have the resources available to implement your portfolio, given your purpose and objectives?***

Step 3: **Decide on specific content options and organization**

A. _____ Artifacts
- _____ student products
- _____ annotations
- _____ goal statements
- _____ self assessments
- _____ other:

B. _____ Attestations
- _____ teacher assessments
- _____ peer assessments
- _____ parent contributions
- _____ other:

C. Will the portfolios have a table of contents? _____ Yes ____No

If yes, who will write the table of contents?
- _____ Teacher
- _____ Student
- _____ Teacher and Student

D. Draft a version of the table of contents below.

Which contents will be mandatory?

Which contents will be optional?

E. How will the portfolio be organized?

_____ chronologically _____ thematically _____ by skill
_____ other:

F. Will you include an emphasis on the Foreign Language Standards? If so, how?
- _____ Teacher's Foreign Language Standards Checklist (or adaptation)
- _____ Student's Foreign Language Standards Checklist (or adaptation)
- _____ other:

Step 4: Plan implementation of portfolio in classroom

A. How often will you visit the portfolios?

_____ Weekly
_____ Biweekly
_____ Monthly
_____ Other:

B. Can you establish specific dates and write them into your instructional sequence?
____ Yes ____ No

If yes, mark the dates the class will work on the portfolios in your syllabus or your academic calender. If no, how do you plan to integrate portfolios?

These are the questions/concerns I still have about portfolio contents:

Student's Annotation for Artifacts

Name: _____

Date(s) Completed: _____

Today's Date: _____

1. Please write about the context (unit, lesson) in which you did this work.

_____

_____

2. What did you learn from doing this work?

_____

_____

3. Why did you include this piece?

_____

_____

4. What objective(s) were you working toward when you did this work? Did you meet the objective(s)?

_____

_____

. What learning strategies did you use when you were doing this work? Did they help you?

_____

_____

Student's Final Portfolio Self-Assessment Checklist

Name: _____ Date: _____

Before you ask your teacher to evaluate your portfolio, you should evaluate your portfolio yourself, measuring your work against the objectives and criteria for the portfolio. This worksheet has two parts, a checklist for contents, organization and reflective questions. Add this self-evaluation to your portfolio.

CONTENTS AND ORGANIZATION

Place a check mark next to each sentence which is true of your portfolio.

_____ My portfolio has a table of contents with the names of the works in a clear order.
_____ My works are arranged in order according to the table of contents.
_____ All of the work in the portfolio has my name on it.
_____ All of the work in the portfolio is dated.
_____ There is a student annotation form with every artifact.
_____ My portfolio has artifacts and attestations that show progress toward the objectives.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

1. What did you learn about yourself as a learner by doing this portfolio?

_____

_____

_____

2. What did you like about creating this portfolio?

_____

_____

_____

3. What did you dislike about creating this portfolio?

_____

_____

4. What main things did you learn about the language you are studying?

5. The next time your class creates portfolios, what would you like to do differently?

6. Did you meet the class objectives for the portfolio?

7. Did you meet your personal objectives for the portfolio?

8. Did the portfolio help you with your learning strategies?

9. Is there anything else which you would like to write about your portfolio?

Teacher's Assessment of Student Portfolio

Student's Name: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

Class: _____

Portfolio representing work from _____ to _____

Date of Evaluation: _____

Evaluation: ***A check is placed next to a completed area. A check plus indicates outstanding work; a check minus indicates less-than satisfactory work; a zero indicates that the area is not complete/cannot be evaluated.***

I. Evaluation of Portfolio Contents: The portfolio contains:

_____ Table of Contents

_____ Statement of learning goals

_____ Required number of artifacts

_____ Annotation form for each artifact

_____ Student's final self-evaluation form

II. Evaluation of Portfolio Organization:

A. The portfolio is organized:

_____ Chronologically

_____ Thematically (by Standard area)

_____ Other: _____

B. Each item in the portfolio is: _____ signed

_____ dated

TEACHER'S PORTFOLIO RECORD

Date: _____

General reflections:

Questions:

Sources for answers (self-reflection, observation, colleagues, professional literature, Internet...):

Discoveries:

Successes:

Concerns:

Communication with colleagues about portfolios (in person, e-mail, telephone):

Time spent with portfolios in class _____ outside class _____

The National Standards for Foreign Language Learning

I. **Communication: Communicate in Languages Other Than English**
- 1.1 Interpersonal communication: Student engages in conversations, provides and obtains information, expresses feelings and emotions, and exchanges opinions.
- 1.2 Interpretive communication: Student understands and interprets written and spoken language on a variety of topics.
- 1.3 Presentational communication: Student presents information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.

II. **Cultures: Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures**
- 2.1 Cultural practices: Student demonstrates an understanding of the relationship between practices and perspectives of the culture studied.
- 2.2 Products of culture: Student demonstrates an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.

III. **Connections: Connect With Other Disciplines and Acquire Information**
- 3.1 Make connections: Student reinforces and furthers own knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.
- 3.2 Acquire new information: Student acquires new information and recognizes the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures.

IV. **Comparisons: Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture**
- 4.1 Language comparisons: Student demonstrates understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and own culture.
- 4.2 Cultural comparisons: Student demonstrates understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and own culture.

V. **Communities: Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home and Around the World**
- 5.1 Community and school: Student uses the language both within and beyond the school setting.
- 5.2 Lifelong learning: Student shows evidence of becoming a life-long learner by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

Teacher's Foreign Language Standards Checklist

Description of Activity (ies):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Put a check mark by the Standards addressed:

I. Communication: Communicate in Languages Other Than English
- _____ 1.1 Demonstrate interpersonal communication
- _____ 1.2 Demonstrate interpretive communication
- _____ 1.3 Demonstrate presentational communication

II. Cultures: Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures
- _____ 2.1 Gain awareness of cultural practices
- _____ 2.2 Become familiar with cultural products

III. Connections: Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information
- _____ 3.1 Make connections with other disciplines/subjects
- _____ 3.2 Acquire new information

IV. Comparisons: Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture
- _____ 4.1 Make comparisons between languages
- _____ 4.2 Make comparisons between cultures

V. Communities: Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home and Around the World
- _____ 5.1 Use language in community and school
- _____ 5.2 Become a life-long learner

Progress Indicators (Statements of what students can do as a result of this activity):

_____

_____

_____

Student's Foreign Language Standards Checklist

Name:_____ Date: _____

This checklist is for this work: _____

I am putting a check mark next to all of the things that are true about how I did this work.

I. By doing this work, I learned something about:

_____ a person/people in_____

_____ the history of _____

_____ the language that I am studying

_____ the English language

_____ _____ (place name) that is the same as where I live

_____ life in _____ (place name) that is the same as in my life

_____ Other:_____

II. I used the language I am studying to:

_____ talk with my teacher

_____ talk with my classmate(s)

_____ read_____

_____ listen to_____

_____ give a presentation about _____

_____ write_____

_____ communicate with someone by:

- _____ e-mail
- _____ letter
- _____ telephone

_____ Other:_____

III. I used the language I am studying:

_____ in school, outside my classroom _____ in my home _____ in my community

IV. I gave or got some information on:

_____ my opinion _____ someone else's opinion

_____ my feelings _____ someone else's feelings

V. Before I did this activity I had never done this:

_____

VI. Before I did this activity I had never known this:

_____

VII. Doing this work relates to something I learned or am learning:

_____ in another class _____ at home _____ somewhere else

VIII. If you put a check mark by one of the phrases for Question VII, please explain:

_____

_____

_____

Teacher's Assessment Check: Responsiveness to Standards

This form can be used to assess the extent to which classroom instruction and activities reflect the National Standards. Portfolio artifacts from the entire class should be included in the tally. This assessment will become more meaningful as it is used over the semesters.

Class: _____
Number of Students:
Semester/Term and Year: _____

1.1 Demonstrate Interpersonal Communication: Total:
1.2 Demonstrate Interpretive Communication: Total:
1.3 Demonstrate Presentational Communication: Total:
2.1 Gain Awareness of Cultural Practices and Perspectives of the Culture: Total:
2.2 Demonstrate Familiarity with Cultural Products: Total:

3.1 Make Connections with Other Disciplines:
Total:

3.2 Acquire New Information:
Total:

4.1 Make Comparisons Between Languages:
Total:

4.2 Make Comparisons Between Cultures:
Total:

5.1 Use the Language Within and Beyond the School Setting:
Total:

5.2 Show Evidence of Becoming a Lifelong Learner:
Total:

Total number of artifacts: ____

Percentage of total number of artifacts by Standard:

1.1.	____	1.2	____	1.3	____	Total:	____
2.1	____	2.2	____			Total:	____
3.1	____	3.2	____			Total:	____
4.1	____	4.2	____			Total:	____
5.1	____	5.2	____			Total:	____